

O N D R U M S

Choosing Hardware Part II

Onward through
the metal maze.

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IN LAST MONTH'S issue, we began our look at various hunks of hardware for the drumkit. Onward.

Bass Drum Pedals

The most important factors when choosing a pedal are feel and response. If you have to push down too hard, or there's a sluggish rebound, the pedal will make you work harder. Just because Joey Superstar uses a certain drum pedal doesn't mean that same model is right for you Every-

one has a different touch, different muscular efficiency, and different requirements. A pedal is a personal thing.

Two types of footboards are available: hinged heel (the most popular) and one-piece. To me, a hinged heel footplate gives a better "anchor point" for your heel, since it's flat to the floor. For heel-up players, its slope keeps the foot from having to move at an unnatural angle.

A chain/sprocket linkage allows the pedal to follow a consistent track for each stroke, and this type is the current rage. A flexible strap allows some wobble in the footboard, while metal links can get bent out of shape, and are non-adjustable. If you're undecided, simply try all three to determine which linkage provides the most efficiency and the best feel.

Three types of spring tension are found in pedals. The most popular seems to be the single expansion spring. Some have double expansion springs (one per side), but they must be tensioned the same, or the pedal will be out of balance. Different spring weights will give various levels of response, and generally, expansion springs are easy to change.

Other models such as Ludwig's renowned Speed King and Premier's 252 have enclosed compression springs. These are free of noise, but can be difficult (and dangerous) to replace. Whatever you choose, be sure the spring can easily be tensioned at a variety of settings, and that it will lock at a certain tension without slipping or de-tensioning.

Some other comfort advantages to certain pedals are adjustable stroke length and adjustable footboard angle. These provide certain nuances to make playing easier for some. They're not absolutely necessary though, because I feel that with proper foot control you can alter stroke and pressure physically on your own.

Finally, be sure the clamp on the base of the pedal will

fit the thickness of your drum hoop. If it doesn't tighten down enough, you might be able to use a spacer, but if the clamp jaw doesn't open enough, you'll end up trying to force the pedal on, causing damage to both it and your hoop.

Tom Stands

To add toms to a single bass drum kit, you'll need a

There are different thicknesses and densities of padding, as well as various seat covering materials. The best way to determine what feels best is simply to sit down on the seat cushion. Be sure it locks tight, and doesn't wobble. Some other things to think about include how high or low you need the seat, and the type of adjustment you want. Drum thrones that use

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floor stand. Like other stands, tom stands have the option of single- or double-braced tripods. Double bracing is probably best for added strength and stability under the weight of the mounted drums. Height is an important factor, too. If you're using a stand for small toms, it must be able to rise even with or higher than your rack toms, for obvious reasons. Some drummers stand-mount their floor toms, and for this application, the stand must go low enough to place the large toms at waist level or below. In either case, the base must open wide enough to balance the drums without tipping over. (Mount the toms over a stand leg for optimum balance.)

You can sometimes do away with one cymbal floor stand if the tom stand has a third hole for placement of a cymbal boom arm. Or the third hole could be used instead for another drum to create a triangular cluster. Then there's the opposite option of using a cymbal stand to hold a tom via one of the many clamp adaptors available.

Thrones

Of all hardware, the drum throne is most important. If you're not comfortable, you can't play your best.

a wing bolt going through a hole in the post offer limited height settings — usually only three or four. Another negative side to this is, after a while the bolt usually jams tight, making it difficult to adjust the tube. A swivel-type or telescopic tube is the better choice. Swivel adjustment is probably best since there's no chance of slippage.

Most pro thrones use a single- or double-braced tripod base. Even if you're on a tight budget, avoid seats having a main support with two thinner bracing legs. They're usually weak and won't provide even weight distribution. Some thrones feature back rests. While I've never tried them, I can appreciate what they can do for proper posture, and they could be useful for drummers with back problems, as well as on those long, tiring gigs. The bottom line is, don't scrimp when buying a throne, because you'll "pay in the end."

That's not all there is for hardware nowadays though. In a future issue, I'll talk about choosing a drum rack. But next month, we'll pick some cymbals to complete the drumkit.

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